

Giving Tablets

For some pet owners, this can be one of the most difficult parts of caring for your pet. But it is very important. The panels below give clear guidelines on techniques to give tablets to dogs and cats. You may also find the following tips to be valuable:

- Read all directions on the label and always follow your vet's dosing instructions for any medication. Give the entire course unless we've advised you otherwise.
- With over-the-counter medications, it's important to weigh your pet accurately to ensure the correct dosage.
- For cats and small dogs, using a pill-popper can make things easier. This device looks like a syringe and is used to push the tablets over the back of the tongue.

Unless the medication needs to be given on an empty stomach, you can try mixing the medicine with food. Use strong-smelling and tasty food to try to disguise the presence of the medicine. Some tablets can be crushed into powder. Some capsules can be opened and mixed with food, but check with your vet first. Small tablets can be disguised within a piece of food or a treat, such as cheese or meat. Some pets will eat tablets coated in butter, honey, peanut butter or Vegemite.

- Try *Waltham Tab Pockets* - a highly palatable, mouldable chew that aids in the administration of tablets via an indentation in which the tablet is inserted.

Giving Tablets to your Dog



1. Hold the tablet between your thumb and index finger. If you need to give multiple tablets, they can be held in the same way, or alternatively, held between your index and middle fingers.



2. To open your dog's mouth, rest your left wrist on his head for leverage, and tilt the head back. Press your thumb and fingers in and upwards on the lips behind the canine teeth on both sides of his mouth. He shouldn't close his mouth because his lips will be between his teeth.



3. Use the free fingers of your right hand to pull downward on your dog's lower jaw. Then, quickly deposit the tablet over the back of the tongue and push it as far backwards as possible with your index finger.



4. Hold your dog's mouth closed for a few moments so he can swallow.

Giving Tablets to your Cat



1. Ask a helper to hold your cat's front legs firmly (from behind) so that they can't scratch. If this is a handful, wrap your cat in a towel to stop them from squirming.



2. With your left hand, hold the cat's head firmly with the thumb and middle finger on either side of the jaw.



3. Tip the head back so they are looking straight up. The mouth will open slightly.



4. Holding the tablet between your thumb and forefinger, use your middle finger to open the mouth fully, by pushing down on the cat's lower front teeth.

5. Drop the tablet down the back of the throat, and (if you are quick enough) follow it down with a push with your forefinger to ensure it has disappeared.

6. Close the mouth and gently rub the nose to stimulate the cat to swallow.

- If you are still having difficulty giving tablets, ask us about alternatives. Many medications (including many wormers, antibiotics and pain relievers) are available as flavoured tablets, liquids or pastes. These might be a bit more expensive, but can make the difference between treatment success and failure. Make sure you keep these securely out of reach of your pets and children.

Some products such as wormers and flea control can be replaced with spot-on liquids (eg. Revolution) or injections (yearly heartworm injections for dogs). Ask us for advice.

- While it's easier to medicate your cat with a helper, you can learn to do it yourself.

- Don't be scared to push the tablet right over the back of the tongue. By doing this, your pet has no choice but to swallow it. If you don't, the tablet may start to dissolve, and your pet will drool and spit it out. You'll have a battle on your hands trying to get it in again!

- Remember the faster the process, the less stress to your pet, and the less he has time to struggle.

- If you have trouble following these instructions, ask us to show you how. We can also dose your pet with worm tablets that you buy from us.

Images thanks to Pfizer Animal Health
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